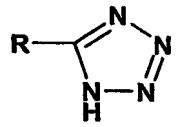
What is claimed is

1. A process for the manufacture of a tetrazole of formula



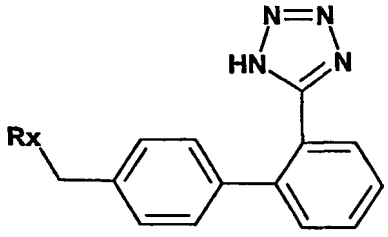
(I)

or a tautomer or a salt thereof, wherein R represents an organic residue;
comprising

(i) reacting a compound of formula **R-CN (II a)** with an azide of formula **$(R_1)(R_2)M\text{-}N_3$ (IIb)**, wherein R has the meaning as defined above; R_1 and R_2, independently of another, represent an organic residue such as an aliphatic residue, an alicyclic residue, a heteroalicyclic residue; an alicyclic-aliphatic residue; a heteroalicyclic-aliphatic residue; a carbocyclic or a heterocyclic aromatic residue; an araliphatic residue or an heteroaraliphatic residue, each residue, independently of another, being unsubstituted or substituted; and M is boron or aluminium; and

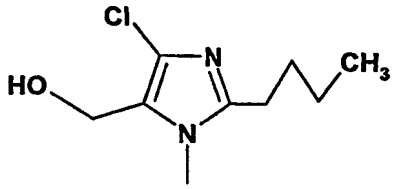
(ii) isolating the resulting compound of formula (I).

2. A process according to claim 1 for the manufacture of said angiotensin II receptor antagonists having as structural feature a tetrazol ring, e.g. of formula (IV),

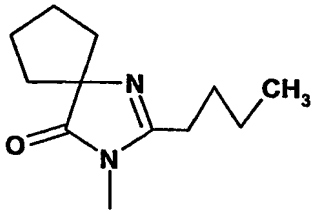


(IV)

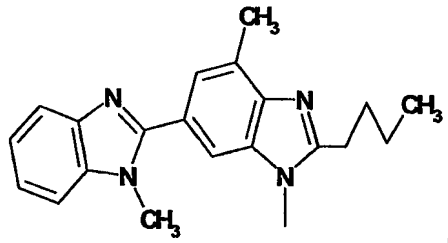
or a tautomeric form thereof, wherein Rx represents a structural element selected from the group consisting of



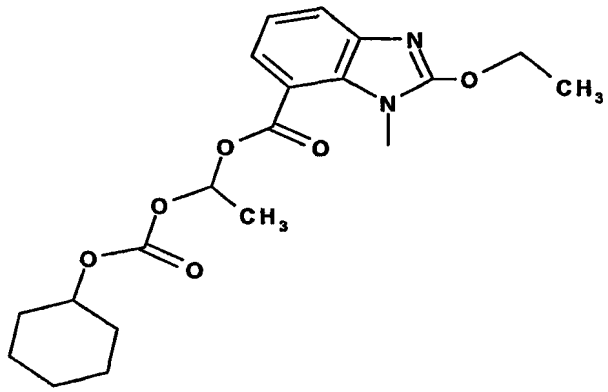
(derived from losartan - cf. EP 253310);



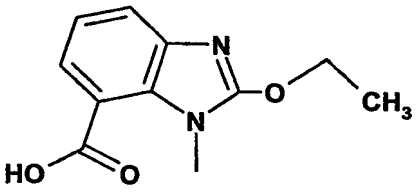
(derived from irbesartan - cf. EP 454511);



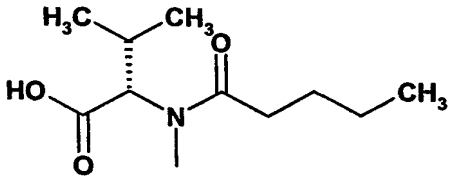
(derived from UR-7247);



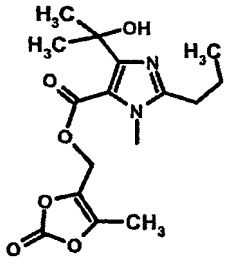
(derived from candesartan-cilexetril- EP 459136);



(derived from candesartan); and



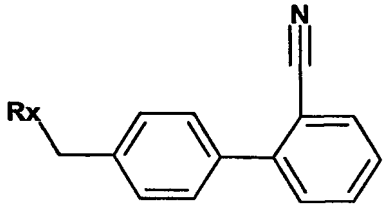
(derived from valsartan - cf. EP 443983);



(derived from olmesartan)

or, in each case, a salt thereof;

characterized by reacting a compound of formula (IV a)

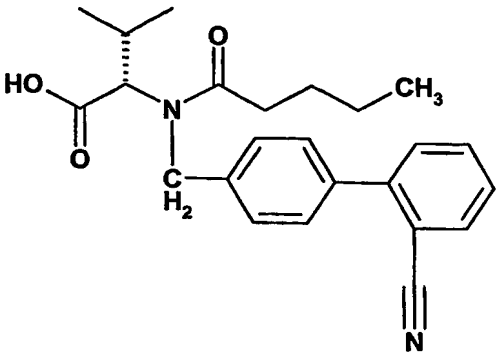


(IV a),

wherein Rx has the meanings as given above,

with a compound of formula **$(R_1)(R_2)M\text{-}N_3$ (II b)**, wherein R_1 and R_2, independently of one another, represent an organic residue; and isolating the resulting compound of formula (IV).

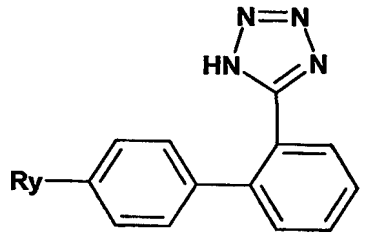
3. A process according to claim 1 for the manufacture of a compound of formula (IV b) comprising reacting a compound of formula (IV c)



(IV c)

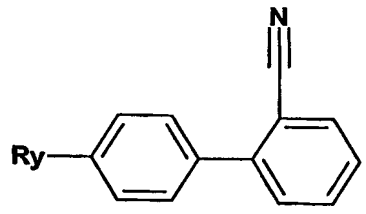
or an ester thereof with an azide of formula $(R_1)(R_2)M\text{-}N_3$ (IIb), wherein R_1 and R_2, independently of each other, have the meanings as defined above, and isolating the compound of formula (IV b).

4. A process according to claim 1 for the manufacture of a compound of formula manufacture of a compound of formula



(V)

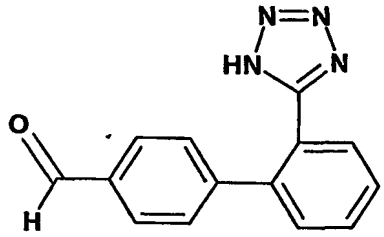
a tautomeric form thereof wherein Ry represents C_1-C_8-alkyl such as methyl; C_1-C_8-alkyl substituted by X' and X' being halogen, sulphonyloxy, hydroxyl, protected hydroxyl, such as bromomethyl, or an acetal of formyl; and X_1 being in a benzylic position, comprising reacting a compound of formula (IV a)



(V a)

with a compound of formula **$(R_1)(R_2)M\text{-}N_3$ (II b)**, wherein R_1 and R_2, independently of one another, represent an organic residue; and isolating the resulting compound of formula (V).

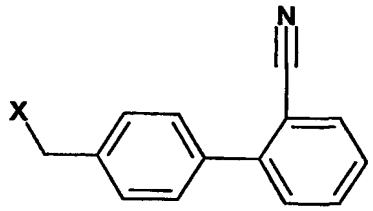
5. A process for the manufacture of the compound of formula (VI)



(VI)

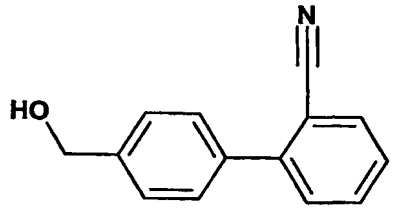
or a tautomer or salt thereof, comprising

(a) treating a compound of formula (VI a)



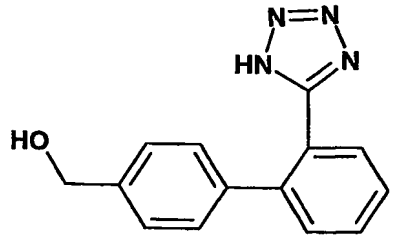
(VI a),

wherein X represents a leaving group, first with a nucleophilic agent and then with a "solvolytic" base resulting in a compound of formula (VI b)



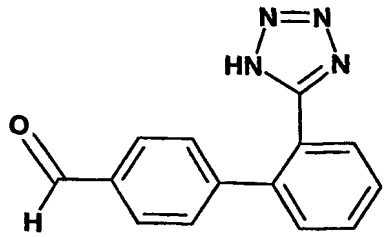
(VI b);

(b) reacting a compound of formula (V b) with an azide of formula $(R_1)(R_2)M\text{-}N_3$ (II b), wherein the variables R_1 and R_2, independently of one another, have the meanings as defined above; resulting in a compound of formula (VI c)



(VI c) or a tautomer or salt thereof

(c) oxidizing a compound of formula (VI c) or a tautomer or salt thereof resulting in a compound of formula (VI)

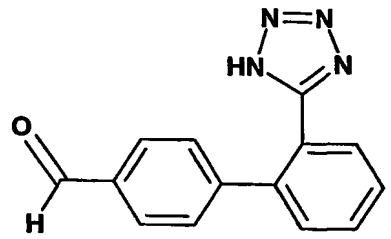


(VI)

or a tautomer or salt thereof; and

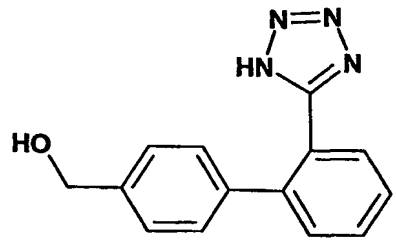
(d) isolating the compound of formula (VI) or a tautomer or salt thereof.

6. A process for the manufacture of a compound of formula (V d)



(VI)

comprising oxidizing a compound of formula (VI c)

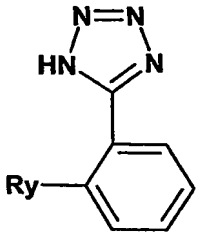


(VI c)

or a tautomer or salt thereof resulting in a compound of formula (VI) or a tautomer or salt thereof; and isolating a resulting compound of formula (VI).

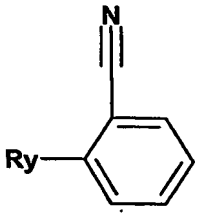
7. A process according to claim 5 or 6, wherein the oxidation is carried out in the presence of an oxidation agent selected from the group consisting of HNO_2, HNO_3 or a corresponding anhydride thereof, and a peroxodisulfate, and wherein as solvent an alkylated aromatic hydrocarbon solvent such as toluene is used.

8. A process according to claim 1 for the manufacture of a compound of formula



(VII)

a tautomeric form thereof, wherein Ry represents C_1-C_8-alkyl such as methyl; C_1-C_8-alkyl substituted by X' and X' being halogen, sulphonyloxy, hydroxyl, protected hydroxyl, such as bromomethyl, formyl or an acetal thereof; comprising reacting a compound of formula (VII a)



(VII a)

with a compound of formula **$(R_1)(R_2)M$-N_3 (II b)**, wherein R_1 and R_2, independently of one another, represent an organic residue; and isolating the resulting compound of formula (VI).

9. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 5 and 8, wherein a compound of formula **$(R_1)(R_2)M$-N_3 (II b)** is used, wherein M is aluminium or boron; and R_1 and R_2, independently of one another, is C_1-C_8-alkyl such as methyl, ethyl, propyl, diisobutyl, tert-butyl or n-octyl; C_3-C_7alkenyl such as allyl or crotyl, C_3-C_7-cycloalkyl such as cyclohexyl; phenyl-C_1-C_4-alkyl such as benzyl or 2-phenethyl; phenyl-C_3-C_5alkenyl such as cinnamyl, or C_3-C_8-cycloalkyl-C_1-C_8-alkyl such as cyclopropylmethyl or cyclohexylmethyl.

10. A compound of formula **$(R_1)(R_2)M$-N_3 (II b)**, wherein M is aluminium or boron; and R_1 and R_2, independently of one another, is C_3-C_7alkenyl such as allyl or crotyl, C_3-C_7-cycloalkyl such as cyclohexyl; phenyl-C_1-C_4-alkyl such as benzyl or 2-phenethyl; phenyl-C_3-C_5alkenyl such as cinnamyl, or C_3-C_8-cycloalkyl-C_1-C_8-alkyl such as cyclopropylmethyl or cyclohexylmethyl.